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THE
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Vol. XIX, No. 2 JULY, 1960

Inspiration and Inerrancy – Some Preliminary Thoughts

I.

Future church historians will show how the three great movements that have shaped the inner life of Christendom in the 20th century are interrelated: the Ecumenical, the Liturgical and what has been called the Bible Movement. What we observe to-day is the fact that the ecumenical as well as the liturgical endeavours of our age have led to a new search for the nature and authority of Holy Scripture as the Word of God. To ask for the reality of the Church means to ask for the objective reality of the Word of God by which it lives. Thus all Christendom seems to be returning to the great issues of the first decade of this century when Rome's fight against the Modernist Movement reached its climax in 1907, and when in 1909 with the appearance of "The Fundamentals" in America the great controversy between "Fundamentalism" and "Modernism" began in Western Protestantism. What would the modernists whom Pius X excommunicated have to say about the sweeping revolution in which Rome since Pius XII is accepting almost the entire results of the historical investigation of the Bible?[1] And what would the Protestant modernists of the same period who interpreted the Bible as a collection of historical documents of the greatest of all religions think of their successors who have begun to realise that the historical approach to the Bible is neither sufficient nor the only one? The theology of Karl Barth in Europe, "Neo-orthodoxy" in America and the new "Biblical Theology" in England are remarkable attempts to rediscover the divine side of the Bible which remains inaccessible to any merely historical research. Thus

1. The greatness of this revolution may be seen from some volumes of the series "Faith and Fact Books. Catholic Faith in the Scientific Age" (translated from French, London, Burns and Oates): "Biblical Criticism" by Jean Steinmann, "The Religion of Israel" by Albert Gelin, "The Origin of Man" by Nicolas Corte (pseudonym), 1959. The new approach to the Bible was made possible through the encyclicals "Divino afflante Spiritu" (1943) and "Humani Generis" (1950).

all churches of Christendom are confronted with the same great problems. If we mention some of them here our aim is not to present a solution, but to clarify questions which can find an answer only through the thorough and patient work of decades and in the co-operation of historians, exegetes and dogmaticians of the various churches.

II.

The Bible is the written Word of God. For 1700 years this has been the conviction of all Christians. It is still to-day the dogma, the public doctrine, of all Catholic churches and of those Protestant churches which still to-day claim allegiance to their old confessions. Whatever difficulties this dogma may present to men of our time, as long as we claim historic continuity with the Church of all ages, our task cannot be to abolish this dogma which is based on the doctrine of Jesus and the apostles. We have rather to interpret it in the light of — not modern theories and hypotheses but — facts established by scientific and historical research. It would be destroyed by any theory meant to limit the statement that the Bible is the World of God. It is not enough to say that the Bible contains this Word and that some parts of the Scriptures are given by inspiration and others, perhaps a very little portion, not. This has been suggested not only by Protestant theologians but it is even, in principle, the solution suggested by such a great Catholic thinker as John Henry Newman in one of his last publications, an article on Inspiration in "The Nineteenth Century," 1883. Deeply concerned with the situation of modern man between the claims of science and those of the church, and in view of the fact that the decrees of the Tridentine and the Vatican councils "lay down so emphatically the inspiration of Scripture in respect to 'faith and morals,'" but "do not say a word directly as to its inspiration in matters of fact," the Cardinal assumed that there are in Holy Scripture "obiter dicta," certain incidental statements, e.g., in geographical or historical matters which do not "bear directly upon the revealed truth" and do not come "under the guarantee of inspiration." This would contradict the dogma that the Bible as such, and not only parts of it, is the Word of God. Nor is it possible to make the Bible only indirectly the Word of God. That happens if one says the Bible can become to us the Word of God. Certainly the Scriptures must become to us the Word of God, i.e., we ought to accept it, by the grace of God, as His Word which He speaks to us. But it remains God's Word even if we do not accept it. The Scripture which the eunuch of Ethiopia read was the objective Word

of God even before by the grace of God he was led to its understanding. And even if he had not found the help of Philip, he would have brought the Word of God in writing to his homeland. Another attempt to understand Scripture is to regard it as the "record" of God's revelation in the history of salvation. No-one denies that it is such a record, and a most faithful at that. But it is impossible to separate the record from what is recorded. Just as the Word of God preached to-day as the faithful exposition of the Scripture is Word of God (*"Verbum Dei praedicatum est verbum Dei,"* as Luther puts it), so the Word of God that came to Jeremiah remains the Word of God when it is written in a book (Jerem. 36:1ff., 28ff.). "For the Word of God is living and powerful" (Hebr. 4:12 cp. Jerem. 1:9f., 17:7, 23:29): this applies to the Word of God in its various forms. If we call Scripture the Word of God, we do not deny that there are also other forms of the Word. The Bible itself tells us that before there was a human ear to hear or a human eye to read there was the "Word of God" (Rev. 19:13), the Logos through whom all things are made (John 1:3 cp. 1 Cor. 8:6), who was from eternity with God and was God and was made flesh in Jesus. As this Eternal Word is living and powerful, so the oral word of the prophets and apostles, the written Word of Scripture and the faithful preaching of this Word of Scripture through the Church are something living and powerful. They share the life and power of Him who is the Word. Holy Scripture is never a dead letter.

III.

How can a book or a series of books, written by men, be Word of God? The first theologians who were confronted with this question were the scribes of the synagogue who collected and interpreted the Old Testament. It has often been overlooked that they in answering this question distinguished between the Torah on the one hand and the prophets and the scriptures on the other. While the latter were regarded as given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the divine character of the Torah as the primary and principal word of God was explained in a different way. The Torah had been created by God thousands of years before the creation of the world.[2] It existed unlike other pre-existing creatures (e.g., paradise, hell) not only in the mind of God, but in reality, a real book in heaven written with black fire on white fire. The content of this book was brought down to earth and given to Israel. God Himself

2. For the references see Strack-Billerbeck, Vol. IV, p. 435ff.

has proclaimed the Ten Commandments to the people. With His own finger He has written them on the tables. The rest of the Torah He has given to Moses directly, without the mediation of the Spirit. Either He has taught Moses the words of the Pentateuch as a teacher teaches his disciple. Or He has dictated it, or written it, too, for Moses on the two tables. Angels are sometimes mentioned in this connection by the rabbis, but not in the sense of mediators as in Acts 7:53, Gal. 3:19, Hebr. 2:2, and sometimes in apocryphal books. The rabbis have never forgotten that there was not a prophet like Moses whom Jahveh knew face to face (Deut. 34:10). It was the Hellenistic synagogue which understood Moses as a prophet who spoke by inspiration of the Spirit. If Rabbinic theology thus distinguishes between the Torah and the rest of the Old Testament, this does not mean that the eight "prophets" (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve — without the later distinction between "prior" and "later" prophets) and the "scriptures" are not God's Word. In them God speaks through the mediation of the Holy Spirit. The term "spoken from the mouth of God" is applied not only to the words of the Torah (e.g., Sifre Deut. 1:6), but also to the prophets (Is. 61:6 Pesiq 126 a Billerbeck op. cit. 439-44. Comp. also Matth. 4:4 and Deut. 18:18).

The distinction between two ways that a book can be the Word of God belongs to Rabbinic and not to Christian theology. It is an attempt to explain the divine character of the Torah by applying to it an Oriental idea of a heavenly book which we can trace in several religions up to the Islamic doctrine of the Koran. The idea is not Biblical. It is, however, related to the Biblical doctrine of the pre-existent Word. In Ecclesiasticus 24:31 the Torah is more or less identified with the Chokmah, the pre-existent wisdom of God. Since the hypostatised Wisdom (Prov. 8 comp. Ecclus 24) was understood by the Church as identical with the Logos on account of the obvious parallel between Prov. 8:22ff. and John 1:1ff., we may find behind the strange Jewish speculation on the pre-existent Torah an anticipation of the New Testament doctrine of the pre-existent, eternal Word.

IV.

For Jesus, the apostles and the Primitive Church, the differentiation between the Torah and the rest of the Old Testament had lost its meaning. All holy scriptures of the canon, Law, prophets and scriptures (Luke 24:44), con-

stitute now "the Scripture" (he graphe). Though the singular can mean an individual passage or a single book, "scripture" and "scriptures" can be used interchangeably for the entire Bible of the Old Testament (comp. Matth. 22:29 with John 5:39, 10:35). Whatever differences concerning the understanding of the Scripture may exist between Jesus and the scribes, between the apostles and their Jewish adversaries, between Church and synagogue, on either side the Scripture is accepted as the Word of God. There is a strange agreement as to the inspiration of the Scriptures. The way that Jesus quotes Ps. 110 as words which David spoke "in the Spirit" (Matth. 22:43), or that Peter (Acts 1:16) quotes a "scripture . . . which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David" corresponds exactly to the way that the rabbis quote the Old Testament. The two passages of the New Testament which teach expressly inspiration, 2 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21, could have been written in the synagogue. Here the question arises: What is inspiration? What does the Church mean when it teaches, *The Bible is the Word of God because it has been written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit?*

In order to find an answer we must first ask: What is this inspiration not? We must be aware of the fact that words like "inspire," "inspiration" are used in modern English in a very general and indefinite sense. But even when used in a specific and pregnant sense they do not do justice to the facts which the Bible and the Church have in mind when they speak of the "theopneustos" Scripture. Inspiration in this sense is the work of the Holy Spirit and consequently something which defies any psychological understanding. Psychology knows such phenomena as the "inspiration" which a poet or an artist experiences when suddenly insights, words, artistic visions are given to him. Nietzsche's description of the "inspiration" in which his Zarathustra was given to him is perhaps the most illuminating testimony of such experience. No-one would be tempted to regard this "revelation," as Nietzsche, comparing his experience with those of former ages, calls it, as wrought by the Spirit of God. The same is true of the "inspiration" claimed by prophets, sibyls and religious writers in many religions of the ancient world. The prophets whom Jeremiah and Ezekiel called false prophets claimed to be true prophets, to have been called by God and to be entrusted with His Word. Psychology cannot discover the difference between true and false prophecy, between that which is truly Word of God and that which is not, between true prophetic experiences and what Jeremiah

called dreams. Therefore, it cannot know what inspiration in the sense of the Bible is, let alone explain it.

The psychological misunderstanding of the inspiration is very old. It begins in the Hellenistic synagogue. To Philon Moses is a prophet, filled with the Spirit of God, full of wisdom and virtue. One must read Philon's Life of Moses in order to understand the greatness of the Old Testament as a book of real history. Philon reads his own ideals into the stories of the Pentateuch. It was the "blameless deed" of a virtuous philosopher when Moses killed the Egyptian (*De Vita Mosis* I, 44). This great man becomes what the Greek calls a *"theios aner"* when he is in ecstasy and the divine Spirit speaks through him, the last of these ecstasies taking place immediately before his death when he prophesies his own death and burial (II, 291). In another context[3] we have shown how this psychological misunderstanding of the Biblical inspiration by Hellenistic Judaism has deeply influenced the early church and how even still Augustine tries to apply this idea of prophetic inspiration and of a divine book produced by such inspiration to the Bible. It is one of the great tragedies of the history of the Church that the early Fathers, and even still Augustine, instead of taking the doctrine de Sacra Scriptura from the Scriptures themselves approached the problem with a preconceived idea of a divine book which must bear all the marks of a book claiming divine origin, a most perfect book without what our human mind would call "error," without contradictions, a book whose divine origin can and must be recognised by any unprejudiced reader. For everybody can see the perfection of the Bible, e.g., if he observes how all prophecies of the Old Testament have been fulfilled in the New. "How is not He to be regarded as God whose prophets have not only given the congruous answer on subjects regarding which they were consulted at the special time, but who also, in the case of subjects respecting which they were not consulted, and which related to the universal race of man and all nations, have announced prophetically so long time before the event those very things of which we now read, and which indeed we now behold?" *(De consensu evang.* I, 19 quoted from Nicene and Postnicene Fathers VI, p. 88). This view of prophetic inspiration which puts the Biblical prophets into one category with the pagan prophets and sibyls is untenable. The inspiration of Isaiah is something quite different from the inspiration of the Sibyl of Cumae whom Augustine

3. "Sacra Scriptura. Observations on Augustine's doctrine of Inspiration" in this Review, Vol. XIV, No. 3, Oct., 1955, pp. 65-80.

regarded as a true prophetess. If this is so, then the psychological explanation of inspiration which Augustine gives and which he has left to future centuries up to our time must be abandoned. All these venerable pictures in which the relationship that exists between the divine and the human author is described and which go back to Augustine and Gregory the Great — head and hands, author and secretaries, the *amanuenses* even as pens *(calami)*, the process of inspiration as *"suggerere"* or *"dictare"* etc. — must be seen as what they are: attempts to understand psychologically what no psychology ever can grasp.

For if inspiration is a work of the Holy Spirit, it is like all works of the Spirit, beyond the sphere of what our reason can understand. A real conversion can be accompanied by deep emotions. These emotions may be studied by a psychologist, but not the conversion itself. The same emotions may be present in an imaginary conversion. The work of the Holy Spirit in human souls may be accompanied with such phenomena as we find them in the Primitive Church, prophecy, glossolaly, miraculous healing and the like. But the same phenomena may accompany experiences which are definitely not caused by the Holy Spirit. Who will explain how faith, hope and charity are created in a human soul? Who will explain the effects of the Word of God, of the sacraments of Christ in the depth of our souls? It is very dangerous, to say the least, to speak of the "experience of the Holy Spirit," or of the guidance of the Spirit, as we so easily do. How often has the spirit who was experienced or whose guidance was acknowledged not the Holy Spirit, but another spirit? If we confess, "I believe in the Holy Spirit," we admit that the Holy Spirit is an article of faith, and not an object of observation.

V.

If we apply this truth to the problem of the Inspiration of Holy Scripture as one of the great works of the Holy Spirit, we may define inspiration as that action of God the Holy Spirit by which He causes chosen men to write His Word in the form of human writings. It would not be sufficient to define this action as assistance, as it sometimes has been done. Many books have been written with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. We would claim that for Augustine's *"Confessiones"* and other works of great Christian writers, or for the great creeds of the church or for many confessions of faith, Such books and documents, however, remain human writings. The Roman

Church which regards the final definitions of doctrine by the pope as infallible exposition of the doctrine entrusted to the Church would nevertheless not ascribe "inspiration" to whom she regards as vicar of Christ and to his decisions. The Vatican Council speaks of "divine assistance." Inspiration is ascribed to the Scriptures only, though the work of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of the "tradition" may practically come very close to His work in the inspiration of Scripture. The divine inspiration of the Scriptures must be distinguished from the way that in each case the will of the Holy Spirit was carried out. In some cases we hear that the writer received the direct command: Write! (e.g., Ex. 17:14; Jerem. 30:2, 36:2; Rev. 1:11). There may have been cases of real dictation, comparable to the phenomenon of "automatic writing" which has been described by psychologists of religion. Just as Biblical prophecy is not bound to any definite psychological experiences (visions, auditions, etc.), so there is no definite form of inspiration. Leviticus has been written and composed in quite a different way from the way in which the Miserere came into existence. John 17 has not been written in the same frame of mind as the epistle of James. A variety of ways of inspiration must be assumed in view of the variety of writings, styles and literary genres found in the Bible. And yet the inspiration itself was in all cases the same. God the Holy Spirit caused His Word to be written in form of human writings. In a "variety of operations" the Holy Spirit created the Bible in which the song of Lamech and the Lord's Prayer, Song of Songs and the epistle to the Romans, the Gospel of St. John and the story of the conquest of Canaan belong together and nothing is superfluous, not even the cloak that Paul left with Carpus at Troas. The Bible is *one* in virtue of the inspiration. Without the belief that God the Holy Spirit has created it we could regard it only as a collection of writings of greater or lesser religious or historical value produced and gathered in the vicissitudes of history. For even the view that the unity of the Bible rests upon the decision of the Church that defined the canon is untenable. According to the belief of the Church of all ages, even the Roman Church, the Church has not produced, but received the Scriptures. She has canonised the books, and only such books, which she firmly believed to have been written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

VI.

If Holy Scripture can be understood properly only as the work of the Holy Spirit, then *the doctrine of Inspiration*

is an essential part of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This is borne out by the Nicene Creed where both are connected in the words, "I believe in the Holy Spirit . . . who spoke through the prophets." What this means is shown by the "according to the scriptures" of the preceding sentence. This again must be read in the light of 1 Cor. 15:3f.[4] If our observation is correct, how could anyone expect from the Synagogue a real understanding of the inspiration of the Scriptures? How could anyone understand the Holy Spirit before Christ's promise of the Paraclete was fulfilled at Pentecost? If we, moreover, remember that only after 300 years, at the synods of Alexandria 362 and Constantinople 381, the divinity of the Holy Spirit was recognised, we can hardly blame the fathers of the first centuries that they were not able to overcome the view of the pneuma as a divine power or divine influence enabling and causing men to speak divine words and to write divine scriptures. The full meaning of the fact that the name Parakletos is given in the New Testament to Christ as well as to the Pneuma Hagion, and that in John 15:26 and 16:7ff. the Spirit is referred to as a person was realised only by the Fathers of the Fourth century. Very rarely, however, they mention the Scriptures among the work of the Holy Spirit.[5] We must not forget that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has never been finished in the Ancient Church. Otherwise the great dissensus between East and West about the Filioque could not have happened. It is significant that the history of the Liturgy also shows a strange neglect of the Holy Spirit. "Who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified," says the Nicene Creed, confirming the rule that every dogma appears first in the Liturgy. The Holy Ghost is indeed mentioned in the conclusion of the prayers of the Church. But the logical conclusion from the trinitarian dogma that prayers can also be directed to the Third Person of the Trinity has never been drawn in the Liturgy. The orations are directed to the Father and the Son, even at Pentecost and in the Roman Mass of the Holy Ghost. This shows the antiquity of the Christian liturgy which still to-day celebrates Pentecost as a feast of Christ as in the first centuries.

4. This basic creed of the Church would be understood better if its Biblical, Pauline background were taken more in account. It has grown out of the binitarian formula of 1 Cor. 8:6, the Pauline, Christian version of the basic confession of the O.T., the "Schema" of Deut. 6:4. Still the creed of 325 is binitarian like the Great Gloria of the Western liturgy. Pauline is the "one God . . . and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things are," as also the "one baptism" (Eph. 4:5) and the connection of the Spirit with the Lord (2 Cor. 3:17).
5. Gregory of Nyssa and Didymos seem to be the only theologians who do that, but they do not elaborate on this thought.

The liturgy knows only the invocation of the Holy Spirit in the *"Veni sancte Spiritus . . ."* out of which the medieval hymns and those of the Reformation churches which are directed to the Holy Spirit have grown. If we must state that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is unfinished in the Church, can we then be surprised that the same is true of the inspiration of Scripture? All churches of Christendom feel to-day this great gap in their doctrines.

VII.

If Holy Scripture is the work of God, the Holy Spirit, its main task is that ascribed to the Paraclete by Christ: "he will teach you all things and will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26); "he will bear witness to me" (15:26); "he will guide you into all truth . . . he will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (16:13f.). Christ is the real content of Holy Scripture. This was not only Luther's understanding of the Bible. It appears already in the Middle Ages, e.g., with Wiclif. Scripture, he points out, can be understood only by him who believes "that Christ is true God and true man because he is the messiah promised to the fathers." Scripture must be understood from those parts which clearly testify to this truth. Then "the entire Scripture and each part of it "teach" that Christ, God and man, is the redeemer of all mankind, the author of the whole salvation and He who gives the last reward."[6] The Jews could not, and the synagogue to-day cannot, understand the Old Testament, because they have rejected Jesus as the Messiah. No-one can understand the Scriptures of the Old Testament, unless he knows Christ and understands what it means that "To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name" (Acts 10:43). As in the great vision of Rev. 5 "the Lamb that was slain" alone is "worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof" (5:9), namely the heavenly book in which the events of the future are written, so the Old Testament is a book sealed with seven seals until the Risen Lord opens it to men, until the Risen Lord "opens their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures" by showing them how "all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the scriptures concerning me" (Luke 24:44f.). As a stained window is

6. "Conclusio autem finalis totius scripturae et cuiuslibet partis suae est, quod Christus, deus et homo, est humani generis . . . redemptor, totius salutis autor et ultimus praemiator," De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae III cap. 31 (ed. Buddensieg vol. III, p. 242, 18ff.).

meaningless until it is seen against the light, so the Old Testament becomes clear to him only who sees the light of Christ shining through it.

This connection between the inspiration by the Holy Spirit and Christ as the content of the Scriptures corresponds to the New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Apart from the passages on the Paraclete (John 14-16), Paul's utterances have to be taken in account. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to confess Jesus as the Lord (1 Cor. 12:3, comp. Matth. 10:19f.), as also the Holy Spirit enables us to call God our Father (Rom. 8:15, see the words in the *"Veni Creator Spiritus"* which express this truth: *"Per te sciamus da Patrem, noscamus atque Filium"*). Christ and the Holy Spirit belong for Paul so closely together that in 2 Cor. 3:17 he almost seems to identify them: "The Lord is the Spirit." This is, however, as the immediately following words "The Spirit of the Lord" show, no real identification, but rather the expression of an inseparable connection as the later Church has it expressed in the*"Filioque."* It could be formulated: "Where Christ is, there is the Holy Spirit. Where the Holy Spirit is, there is Christ." As in the Gospel Jesus and the Holy Spirit belong together since the Incarnation, so in the entire Bible Christ and the Holy Spirit belong together from the first chapter of Genesis where we read that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters when God created all things through His eternal Word (Gen. 1 read in the light of John 1:1ff., 1 Cor. 8:6, Hebr. 1:2), to the last chapter of Revelation where the Spirit and the Church say: "Come, Lord Jesus" (22:17.20). This understanding of Holy Scripture does not mean that we can find in any passage a christological meaning, or that we even should look for it. Only those passages of the Old Testament which are clearly interpreted in this way in the New Testament can be regarded as clear testimonies to Christ. But they are sufficient to convince us that Christ is the content proper of the entire Bible even there where we cannot perceive Him with the limitations of our human mind.

VIII.

This understanding of the inspired Bible as the Scriptures in which God, the Holy Spirit, testifies to God, the Son, frees us from many a false understanding of inspiration. Men of the 16th and 17th century who thought of books and their authors in terms of Humanism were embarrassed by what seems to be the very bad Greek of

some of the New Testament writings. A perfect book must be written in a perfect, flawless language. The apologists of all times since Origen's "Against Celsus" have had to defend the Bible against those who found in it moral deficiencies, inaccuracies, contradictions and errors. The Church Fathers as well as the medieval and modern theologians were confronted with the fact that the story of creation cannot be understood in terms of natural science. The conviction is growing that the time has come when the Church has to give up definitely the well-meant attempts to reconcile the first chapter of the Bible with "modern" science. Since theology moves very slowly, "modern" science proves in each case to be the science of yesterday. The church has defended the geocentric view of the world when it long since has become obsolete. It has accepted the heliocentric view when the centre had already moved to the centre of our galaxy and from there to other galaxies. How detrimental to the Christian faith this has been is now generally recognised. The rapid development of modern physics has led to serious warnings on the part of Roman theologians as well as such an outstanding leader of conservative Reformed theology as Professor Berkouwer against the repetition of the great mistakes made in the case of Galileo and on other occasions. It may be a heroic act of faith to accept the story of creation as a substitute for a scientific view of the origin of the universe, but to demand that from a Christian means to excommunicate all scientists who in firm belief in their God and Saviour do the work of their calling which is based on the dominion over all the earth given to man by his creator. How many souls have been lost through the failure of the Church to do justice to the facts established by solid research, by experiment and observation. We have shown on another occasion what we could learn in this respect from the Fathers of the Church.[7] This does not imply any denial of a dogma of the Church. Neither the creation of the world "out of nothing" is abandoned, nor the special creation of man and the fall of the first man as an historic event. What must be admitted by the Church is that the Bible in speaking of such things uses a language different from ours. It speaks to men of very ancient times in a way which was even by the Church Fathers felt to be very old and simple. How could men of such times have understood a story of creation told in the terminology of Aristotle or Augustine, let alone of 20th century science

7. "Hexaemeron: Theology and Science with the Church Fathers," this Review, Vol. XVII, No. 3, October, 1958.

which probably will be obsolete in another century? This is what Chrysostom has called the *"synkatabasis" ("condescensio")* of God. "Behold the condescension of the Divine Scripture, see what words it uses on account of our weakness," he says commenting on Gen. 2:21 (Migne SG 53, col. 121, comp. col. 34f., 135; vol. 59, col. 97f.). In a similar way Jerome and other Fathers have solved the problem. If we say that, we do not think that the way of thinking and speaking in those very early times was inferior to ours. It was different, but we would by no means dare to say that our scientific view of the world gives us a deeper insight into the nature of the world. They were very far from our rational thinking. They saw realities which we no longer see, just as primitive people to-day still observe things which we no longer perceive. What they said about such realities must not be regarded as myths, though it sometimes may remind us of the language of mythology, the reason being that pagan mythology is a deteriorated and paganised echo of such wisdom.

In addition to the "law of condescension" in the Bible we must take in account what we could call the "law of parallels" in Holy Scripture. As we find in the Hebrew language the *parallelismus membrorum* in poetic and prophetic texts, so we find the strange fact that almost every important event is told several times and always with variations. There are two stories of creation. There are all the other parallels in the Pentateuch, due to the different sources. We have two great histories of Israel, one written from the prophetic, the other from the priestly point of view. In the New Testament even four lines run parallel in the Gospels. What does it mean that we have parables and other sayings of Jesus in the Gospels, even the Lord's Prayer and the eucharistic words in various forms. Two baptismal formulas also appear in the New Testament. This must have a meaning. How easy would it have been for the Church to agree on one Gospel or to create an official harmony of the Gospels. Why have all attempts at such a harmony failed? The Church of Syria which used the Diatessaron became heretical and its return to orthodoxy coincided with the return to the Four Gospels. The Gospel Harmonies created in the 16th and 17th centuries, or those to be found in some Catholic Bibles, have proved to be failures. The picture of Jesus which they give is always unrealistic and lifeless, so when, e.g., a twofold cleansing of the Temple is assumed or even several healings of the same person. No-one has been able to harmonise the apparent "contradiction," regarding the

chronology of the Passion and of the events of Easter. But are these real contradictions? If we compare paintings of the crucifixion by four great painters, who would find "contradictions" and "errors" in them? Have not Grünewald and Dürer seen more than a photograph could show? The strange idea of the sacred history which underlies the apologetic attempts to harmonise all differences goes back to an age which no longer was able to understand the biblical idea of history. Neither the Jewish rabbis nor the Fathers of the Church nor their pagan adversaries like Celsus and Porphyrius have been able to think in terms of history. This is to a large degree due to the fact that Greek philosophy had no understanding of history. What we have to learn again is to measure Biblical history by its own standards. Instead of asking whether a certain narrative corresponds to our standards, we should ask: Why did the Biblical writer tell events and record words just the way he did it? Luke, e.g., was a critical historian who evaluated his sources (1:1ff.). Why has he given, or inserted, in Acts three reports on the conversion of Paul which are not in full agreement? He must have been aware of this. Instead of finding fault with his method and accusing him of errors we should rather ask: What was his intention when he wrote these passages? Why did he not regard as intolerable contradictions what later centuries have called that? The great concern of the Church in factual historical truth is deeply rooted in the Bible. How carefully are the events in the history of salvation dated (e.g., Is. 6:1, Amos 1:1, Luke 3:1, 1 Cor. 15:1ff.) lest anyone might deny the facts. The words "under Pontius Pilate" belong to the Nicene Creed just as "according to the Scriptures." What, then, is factual historical truth for the holy writers? This is one of the great problems which Biblical theology has to investigate and to answer. It cannot be answered by the statement that "truth" in the Bible has a deeper and more comprehensive meaning than "veritas" with Aquinas (Summa th. I qu. 16 "De Veritate"). However, biblical truth cannot be without what we understand by propositional truth, because otherwise the revelation of the Bible would become myth. All creeds of the Church from the first creedal statements of the New Testament present facts (see 1 Cor. 15:1ff.). Without this factual, dogmatic character Christianity would become a mystery religion. How and why the holy writers transmit to us one truth in several parallel records and what the variety means, this is one of the foremost problems of biblical hermeneutics. It is a most comprehensive question,

for the fact also that the New Testament knows and uses two "Old Testaments," the Hebrew and the Greek, comes under the "law of parallels."

IX.

Whatever the answer to these questions may be, one thing Christian theology can never admit, namely, the presence of "errors" in the sense of false statements in Holy Scripture. The holy writers may have used, as they actually have, sources, traditions, methods of a pre-scientific historiography, literary forms of the ancient Orient which we do no longer possess. Their language may be figurative, their narratives sometimes bordering on legend and poetry or even using such forms of expression. Yet all this has been written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In a way that is and always will remain inscrutable to human reason these truly human writings are God's Word. The inspiration of Holy Scripture has often been understood as an analogon to the incarnation. It seems that this view is becoming more and more the common possession of Christendom, especially since it has been introduced into Roman Catholic theology and approved by the encyclical of 1943. To the dilemma formulated by Paul Claudel, "either the Bible is a human work . . . or else Scripture is a divine work," Steinmann (op. cit. p. 14) has rightly replied: "One might as well say: Either Jesus Christ is man or he is God." We cannot go into this theological problem here. The time may come when the christological decision of Chalcedon will become the pattern of a solution of the doctrine of Holy Scripture and its inspiration. Between the Monophysitism of Fundamentalists who failed to understand the human nature of the Bible and the Nestorianism of modern Protestant and Anglican theology which sees the two natures, but fails to find the unity of Scripture as a book at the same time fully human and fully divine, we have to go the narrow path between these two errors. But we must never forget that the Chalcedonense has been authoritatively explained in the doctrine of the *"enhypostasia."* The human nature has its "hypostasis" in the divine. So Holy Scripture is first of all and essentially God's Word. The human word in the Bible has no independent meaning. What would the books of Samuel and even the epistle to the Romans mean outside the Bible? God has given us these writings as His Word. What is Holy Scripture without its content, Christ?" *"Tolle Christum e scripturis, quid amplius invenies?"* as Luther wrote against Erasmus "Take Christ out of the

Scriptures, what remains?" As we humbly bow before the mystery of the incarnation of the Eternal Word, so we accept in great humility the mystery of Holy Scripture as the written Word of God in which the Father through the Holy Ghost testifies to Christ: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

H. SASSE.

Doublets and Contamination

The evaluation of similarity and difference in critical methodology.

In 1753 Astruc published his book, *Conjectures sur les Memoires Originaux, dont il parait que Moyse s'est servi pour composer le Livre de la Genese.* Since then comparisons and contrasts in formal literary features have provided material for the standard methods of literary criticism. They have been used with scrupulous precision to achieve documentary analysis. In general, works of introduction and commentaries on the Old Testament have been a presentation of, and a utilisation of, the results of this work.[1]

Conservative reaction to such works has usually taken the form of critical appraisal of the results. In consequence, the debate ran off into endless discussions of details, an area in which the issues involved admit of no decisive resolution.[2] Both criticism and anti-criticism have been insufficiently attentive to the processes that yielded the results, and in particular to the methodology of those processes. If critics have complained that conservatives are really controlled by their dogmatic predilections,[3] they have been equally open to the accusation that they have not been sufficiently alert to the presuppositions that lurk in their accepted procedures.

There is need of a formal and explicit examination of the problem of evaluating and explaining the similarities which are frequently noted between two passages. The term "doublet" is applied all too readily to any and every example of this kind of thing. The use of this technical

1. **The Sacred Books of the Old Testament. A Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text printed in colours, with notes** (Leipzig, 1893 ff.), edited by Paul Haupt, presented these results by printing the text of each identified document in a different colour.
2. James Orr's **The Problem of the Old Testament considered with Reference to Recent Criticism** (London, 1908), was written in this vein for the most part, as his major chapter headings show, e.g., "The Old Testament as affected by Criticism;" "Difficulties and Perplexities of the Critical Hypothesis." His discussion is confined largely to uncertainties and inconsistencies in the results of criticism.
3. H. H. Rowley justly accuses the conservatives of "employing their learning to defend positions which were dogmatically reached" **(The Old Testament and Modern Study** [Oxford, 1951], p. xv) and of "using the evidence as a support where it is convenient, and explaining it away where it is not" (ibid., p. xviii).

label gives the false impression that there has been an advance in understanding, whereas it is no more than a statement in other words of the observed fact of similarity.

Additional confusion is introduced when a variety of terms may be invoked to refer to such similarity, without definition of such terms in relation to the precise *kind* of similarity involved. The term "doublet" may be used indiscriminately to describe two passages, Ge. 4:17-26 and Ge. 5, which resemble each other formally in being genealogies, and in detail in having one name in common;[4] passages which have been interwoven into a single narrative;[5] passages which are separate, but yet have many points of resemblance.[6] Driver refers to the three similar narratives, Ge. 12:10-20, 20, 26:6-11, variously as "repetition," "variations of the same fundamental theme," or "duplicate version."[7] Other terms used are "parallel," "imitation," etc. Some of these terms already beg the question of the relationship between the two passages which show similarities. Critics are often content to "explain" the similarities by saying that "the obvious explanation in such cases is that the compiler has used two sources,"[8] or with some similar remark.

This does not mean that results are given without any attempt to explain how they were obtained. Sometimes the processes are also expounded, or at least illustrated. The effectiveness of Wellhausen's classic *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* lay precisely in the fact that it uncovered the inner structure of the higher critical method. But insofar as these treatments were content to *describe* the method, they dealt with hodegetics rather than methodology.

> "Hodegetics assumes that the way is there, that it has been used, and points it out. Methodology, on the other hand, is the science which decides *how* the way is to be laid, and *approves or disapproves* of the way that has been laid."[9]

The distinction may be illustrated by the discussion of the relation between the "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew's Gospel and the "Sermon on the Plain" in Luke. A typical discussion is found in Plummer's Commentary.[10] He notes the various explanations, i.e., the *results* of

4. W. O. E. Oesterley and Theodore H. Robinson, **An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testamaent** (London, 1953), p. 26.
5. Ibid., p. 27.
6. Ibid., p. 30.
7. S. R. Driver, **The Book of Genesis** (London, 1906), pp. 205, 254.
8. W. K. Lowther Clarke, **Concise Bible Commentary** (London, 1952), p. 334.
9. Abraham Kuyper, **Principles of Sacred Theology** (Grand Rapids, 1954), p. 33.
10. Alfred Plummer, **A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke**[5] (Edinburgh, 1922), pp. 176 ff.

critical study, and classifies them under six types, listing the protagonists of each theory. He then makes some remarks about some of the arguments used, occasionally setting one against another, concluding with his own tentative suggestions. Only then does he summarise the evidence, both as to details and also as to the general plan. And there the matter is allowed to rest. This is only one of numerous illustrations that could be given from Biblical studies as well as from outside them.

It is not so easy to find a formal discussion, not so much of comparative methods, as of the principles involved in the method, especially with a view to defining the margin of uncertainty involved in the exercise of any particular kind of critical judgment.

In contrast to any such methodology of criticism, the standard introductions to critical method reflect the characteristic nineteenth century outlook which assumes that the history of a thing is the explanation of a thing. They introduce criticism by sketching its historical development. This is true of Gore, Pfeiffer, Eissfeldt, Bleck-Wellhausen, Lods, Simpson, Young, etc. It is usually implied that the development has been one of evolutionary progress in which the later supersedes the earlier. But this can only be allowed if the superiority of the latest methods is explicitly demonstrated.[11]

This paper attempts to distinguish several kinds of similarity which may be found in passages which resemble each other, and to point to some of the factors which have to be taken into account when evaluating such similarities as are actually found.

1. The degree of similarity may vary from almost complete agreement to the possession of a few points of remote resemblance. In the former case, and especially when there is extended word for word identity, we may admit the hypothesis that we are dealing with two *recensions* of the same original document. In its simplest form this implies parallel, but independent, descent from an earlier copy. In this case it is the differences, rather than the similarities, that have to be explained. The term "recension" should be used only when the differences between the two exemplars amount to no more than the familiar consequences of the changes which occur in all documents transmitted by continual copying. Such parallel

11. The cloud of witnesses may be invoked to silence the voice of anti-criticism with the argument that "the consensus of so many acute and able scholars . . . cannot, as some would have us believe, rest upon illusion" (S. R. Driver, **An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament**[8] [Edinburgh, 1909], p. xviii).

passages are valuable, if only because they provide direct evidence for changes of this kind. They provide also a solid basis for the recovery of the original text, or at least of the text in an earlier stage of its transmission. When only one recension survives, inferences as to the text of the earlier copies or of the original will remain largely conjectural. If two or more recensions are available, their points of identity may be taken as authentic (at least in an earlier common source), while their points of disagreement identify the places where change has occurred, in one of them at least. If one only is suspected of being the result of change, then the other preserves the original, providing a starting point from which the change to the reading in the second has to be explained. Such an explanation illustrates the kind of change from an original text which occurs in transmission. Otherwise the original must be restored on the assumption that both surviving readings have diverged from it, and a plausible explanation of that divergence proffered.

Besides the recovery of an original text, the study of two divergent recensions enables also the control of speculations about textual changes suspected of having occurred in a single surviving text by means of the analogies of real cases.

The Old Testament has within it many duplicate passages which may be approached as recensions of the same original. The oracle reported in Is. 2 and Mic. 4 is a good example. The ten commandments are given in Ex. 20 and De. 5. Other repeated passages are II Sa. 22 (Ps. 18), Ps. 14 (Ps. 53), Ps. 40:13-17 (Ps. 70), Ps. 57:7-11 (Ps. 108:1-5), Ps. 60:5-12 (Ps. 108:6-13). To these may be added the extensive passages in Kings which are repeated in Isaiah or Jeremiah, or in the Books of Chronicles, but these examples at once introduce another feature. Two surviving recensions need not stand in a similar relation to their common source. Each may reflect different kinds of change to varying degrees, depending on the circumstances of their transmission. To the extent that there have been consistent trends, connected perhaps with the bias (albeit unconscious) of the copyists, the ultimate copy may embody changes which give it a marked character, so that it might well be called a *version*. Suffice it for the moment to say that the difference between a recension and what we shall later define as a version is one of degree rather than kind.

A special kind of repetition is found in the Bible when an originally continuous composition is divided into two, and a bridging section becomes both the end of one part and the beginning of another. This seems to be the relation

between Jdg. 2:6-9 and Jos. 24:28-31 and between Ezr. 1:1-3 and II Ch. 36:22-23 (Cf. I Esdras, which takes up the story earlier). Again there are repetitions which arise from literary conventions of which the extra-biblical literature of the ancient Near East affords numerous parallels. These may be illustrated by the verbatim repetition of Abraham's instructions and of the slave's prayer in Gen. 24, of the dreams of Gen. 41, and of the specifications for the tabernacle furnishings in Exodus.

2. In other cases two passages may be similar because one is based on the other (or the original text of one is based on an earlier or original text of the other), but adapted from it in some way different from mere copying by revision or rewriting of some kind. The dependent or secondary passage may then be called a *version* of the first.

Several different relationships may exist between a version and its original, depending on what was done in making the version.

The changes may affect only the literary form of the material. This may occur within the same language, as in cases when poetry is turned into prose, or old-fashioned expressions are brought up to date; or it may occur in translation into another language. When a version is made by changing the outward literary dress of a passage, it becomes an important question how much its substance is changed by the change of form. In cases of outright translation the evaluation of the factors involved requires extensive comparative studies of the languages and cultures concerned. But even within the same language a number of acute critical issues are raised. An example of this is found when an editor incorporates into his work material from some extraneous source, modernising its language, to some extent at least, into conformity with his own style. Here even the simplest substitution of contemporary vocabulary will bring about a drift in meaning or connotation since identical synonyms are few, and the editor's choice of words is likely to be influenced, if only unconsciously, by his ideological predilections. On the other hand, it is a matter for careful study just how far a writer can obliterate the distinctive style of his sources by reworking them. This may be illustrated by the standing problem of differentiating the alleged J and E material within the JE corpus.[12] The recklessness or caution of

12. If J and E are supposed to be derived by independent development from an earlier source G, then their full description requires not only an exhibition of the matters in which they stand in contrast with each other, but also of the processes by which each has developed its distinctive features as against G. If J and E may be distinguished by the consistent use of one member only

investigators handling this question can be estimated only when we have defined the capabilities of the methods employed, i.e., when, instead of studying the problem itself, we study the method of tackling it.

It may be suspected, *a priori*, but most reasonably, that while spelling would be the easiest feature of a text to modernise, and while the replacement of obsolescent words by current synonyms is readily done, to modernise the syntax may often require extensive recasting of sentence constructions, even to the point where a redactor *rewrites* rather than *revises* the original. If the passage has been submitted to such drastic transformation, the past history of its content cannot be recovered by study of its surviving literary form, and the fashion of the dress it now wears gives no indication of its age. It is a consequence of our altogether inadequate knowledge of the historical development of the Hebrew language that linguistic criteria are rarely invoked, and never invoked convincingly, to establish a relative set of dates for the several documents which are distinguished within the Pentateuch, Joshua, etc. But even if this could be done, one would still need tools of analysis to detect recalcitrant features which might survive as a substratum of the normalised text. The critic will need to resort first of all to the evidence of syntax to differentiate and date sources. This is not easy, since the most likely survivals will be cases in which archaic syntax has been misunderstood, and, passing for some different later usage, has remained unchanged. Again, if syntax does not change as rapidly as other structural features (a subject not yet sufficiently investigated by glottochronologists), comparative historical studies of syntax may not yield precise differentia for use in dating. The possibilities of dialectal variations need also to be kept in view, rendering the problem even more complex. These considerations should be enough to throw considerable doubt on the methods relying chiefly on vocabulary studies for the identification of documentary sources which hitherto have dominated Old Testament studies.

A particular case of a version due to revision is met when it is suspected that a prose version is based on a poetic original. Such a theory of the literary history of the Patriarchs has been advanced by Cassuto,[13] a suspicion

of pairs of virtual synonyms (Yahweh/'Elohim, Canaanite/Amorite, Sinai/Hereb, Hobab/Jethro, etc.), one is required not merely to point to these as criteria for identifying the documents, but also to explain how these changes in vocabulary have occurred in stories about otherwise similar events.

13. **From Noah to Abraham** (Jerusalem, 1949) [in Hebrew].

connected with the idea that the earliest literature of a people, especially of a primitive people, is poetry.[14] One may allow that poetry is more likely to survive a long process of oral transmission than prose, if only because it is more easily learnt and remembered. But a prose version need not necessarily be later than a poetical one. Even if the prose shows more modern language than the parallel poetry, this may be the result of the freedom of its form which permits changes without loss, while the archaic language of poetry is frozen in a form which would be destroyed if it were modernised. Again, a poetic version of a story in prose might be deliberately composed in archaic language, after the usual conventions, and so give quite innocently an impression of greater age.

3. So far we have suggested that the term "recension" be used when there have been adventitious changes, and that the term "version" be used when there have been deliberate changes, leading to differences in two passages which still remain recognisably and essentially "the same." The method of estimating what degree of persisting similarity amounts to "essential sameness" requires careful consideration. It should be based as far as possible on a distinction between the matter and the form of the passage. "Recension" and "version" may be used to describe cases in which the changes in substance are the result of changes in form, but they imply different behaviour in the human agents through whom those changes in form have come about.

In other cases it may be observed that the alterations which have occurred have brought about changes in the substance of the passage. Original facts or ideas may have been omitted, or new ones added. In such cases the *degree* of change in the passage is not to be measured simply by the *number* of differences noted; a few minor changes in detail may alter the entire tenor of a passage. The term *variation* may be used for changes in substance which seem to be due entirely due to chance, or for which an explanation is not yet established. "Variation" thus stands in the same relation to content as "recension" stands to form. The term *variant* is already widely accepted to refer to a reading in one text which differs from the reading at the same point in another text of the same literary work. It amounts to no more than a statement of the observed fact of difference. Two readings may contrast in a variety of ways — in spelling, wording, meaning, etc. — but all be called

14. See, for example, Adolphe Lods, **Histoire de la Litterature Hebraique et Juive** (Paris, 1950), p. 22.

"variants." A "recension" or a "variation" may equally be described as the result of the introduction of one or more "variants." When we judge that the formal changes do not affect content, we will call the result a "recension." When we consider that the content has changed, we shall use the term "variation" to draw attention to the fact that we are dwelling on this side of the problem. But, as pointed out above, when it is difficult to distinguish between form and content, the difference between these two terms becomes one of degree only.

4. We suggest the use of the term *revision* in the same relation to content as the term "version" bears to form, in other words, when there seems to be some pattern or purpose in the substantial changes that bring about a revision. Material changes leading to variations are adventitious; those leading to a "revision" are deliberate or tendentious. A full explication of the relation between a revision and its source will then require some investigation of the *motivation* of the reviser.

One type of revision that may be distinguished is the *adaptation* of material to local circumstances or to changed conditions. A detailed comparison of the several codes of law, biblical and otherwise, might indicate that some are related to each other in this fashion. The historical circumstances in which the various cultic ordinances of H, P, Ezekiel, and other passages, could have found expression then provide additional data to be taken into account when evaluating the literary relations between them. In this way literary criticism runs over into historical criticism.

Another kind of alteration is frequently observed in ancient literature when a god or hero rises to popularity and captures the traditional exploits, functions, or epithets of an earlier favourite. The myths and legends of antiquity present numerous examples of this kind of thing. Such processes of *transference* are worthy of independent study in their own terms. Such considerations are involved, for instance in deciding whether II Sa. 21:19 is evidence that the Goliath episode is wrongly attributed to David, so that I Ch. 20:5 is harmonistic in its tendencies, or whether I Ch. 20:5 is true, and II Sa. 21:19 defective. In its simplest form, transference consists of the *substitution* of the name of the new favourite for that of the old one in a legend which is otherwise left unchanged. Such, for example, is the suggested relation between the Prayer of Nabonidus and Daniel 4.[15] At the other extreme short

15. See, for example, J. T. Milik, **Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judea** (London, 1959), p. 37.

episodes or mere details of incidents may be "stolen" from one source and added to a more illustrious cycle, which thus grows by *accretion.* Such factors are said to have operated, for instance, in the growth of the biblical traditions of the career of Moses, Noth occupying the extreme position that it is mainly accretion with practically no core.[16] Here, in one point at least, there is a possibility of comparison with external material, since the motif of the child on the river in the basket is found also in the legend of the birth of Sargon of Agade.[17] This, however, cannot be described as *borrowing* until the lines of transmission have been plausibly indicated, and direct dependence demonstrated. Until this is done it is better to describe such similarities as a recurring folk-loristic pattern that awaits further explanation.[18] It may be added that even when borrowing is proved, it is only the borrowed material in its borrowed form that may be called a variation of the original.

It will be realised that any cycle of stories may be the result of complex combinations of various processes, all operating to a different extent.

A third kind of revision may be distinguished when the source material is submitted to a process of *reinterpretation* in which the events are selected and exhibited in a different perspective. All history writing, and, indeed, the orderly arrangement of non-historical material as well, involves such selective factors. Here, however, we have in view only the reorganisation of a history so that the revision and the original embody differing philosophies of history, or the application of different value judgments, which are thus opened to study in terms of comparison and contrast. It is along these lines that critics seek to delineate the main interests or tenets of the Deuteronomic school, or of the "priestly" editors of Chronicles.

It should be added that the text of any kind of version, variation or revision is prone to the kind of changes due to copying which so far we have mentioned only in the case when they lead to recensions. Such changes will occur along all lines of transmission in addition to whatever

16. M. Noth, Geschichte Israels (Gottingen, 1950), p. 117 ff.
17. The legend may be read in James B, Pritchard (Ed.), **Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament**[2] (Princeton, 1955), p. 119. Compare also the story of the childhood of Cyrus told by Herodotus (I. 107-130).
18. The undisciplined listing of similarities of this kind found its classic expression in the work of Frazer. Its **reductio ad absurdum** may be seen in the enormous work of Jensen **Das Gilgamesh-Epos in der Weltliteratur** I (Strassburg, 1906), II (Marburg, 1929), but the principle finds endless uncritical expression in less pretentious works.

other changes occur due to the other factors we have described. This complicates the picture, but does not necessarily obscure it. The changes which produce variations are also likely to occur side by side with those producing versions and revisions. Finally, a text may be submitted, either in the same operation, or in successive phases, to changes in both form and content to produce a version which is also a revision.

In summary, the changes we have discussed so far fall into two main classes. Some are accidental, unconscious, small, continual, and cumulative. These lead to recensions and variations. Others are purposive, deliberate, extensive, and simultaneous. These lead to versions and revisions. The former are random and indiscriminate; the latter are integrated and controlled, and are therefore capable of categorisation along clear lines which may be attributed to the intention of the person or school making the revision.

(To be concluded.)

SHORTER NOTICES (Continued from page 64)

The Gospel According to St. John, by Alan Richardson. "Torch Bible Commentaries" (S.C.M. Press); 12/6. It is unfortunate that the restrictions necessarily imposed by the scope of this series should have been so severely emphasised when it came to the Fourth Gospel. This Gospel perforce refuses to be compressed within such narrow confines. Seeing that a separate volume could be allowed to Genesis 1-11, and another to Isaiah 40-55, could not the allocation of space here have been more generously apportioned? Yet Canon Richardson has valiantly faced his unenviable task and performed it well. Into these pages he has judiciously condensed a very great deal without any suggestion of scrappiness, and the outcome is, in spite of external limitations, a helpful commentary. He has won a little more space for the commentary proper by reducing the introductory sections and by refusing to be side-tracked into discussing all the extraneous influences that are customarily invoked for their alleged bearing on this Gospel. In regard to authorship, he comes down on the side of the so-called John the Elder, in the reviewer's opinion rather too heavily.

The Epistle to the Ephesians, by John A. Allan. "Torch Bible Commentaries" (S.C.M. Press); 9/6. Principal Allan follows firmly in the steps of E. J. Goodspeed and C. L. Mitton (who cannot, however, claim to have written the last word on the matter) in rejecting the Pauline authorship of this Epistle. Freed of any Pauline setting, and interpreted accordingly, the Epistle is commended as having many resemblances rather to Johannine thought than to Pauline. The exposition is clear and practical, and interspersed among the hundred pages of commentary are eight short but useful essays on varied topics such as Salvation by Faith, the Body of Christ, and Demonology in Ephesians. The volume should readily hold its own with the earlier volumes in the series, for it is a helpful and readable contribution.

Book Reviews

THE FAITH OF THE CHURCH

Report of a Joint Commission on Church Union set up by The Congregational Union of Australia and New Zealand, The Methodist Church of Australasia, The Presbyterian Church of Australia (Melbourne, 1959), pp. 44; 2/6.

This report, soon to be followed by a "Second Report on THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH," is one of the most important documents of Australian church history. What distinguishes it favourably from similar union documents in other parts of the world is its spiritual character: "We make this poor offering to the Lord of the Church and ask Him to take, correct and use it, praying that what we have spoken in error may perish from men's memory, and — if it be His Will — what we have here done be taken in its imperfection and used for the building up of the Body which is the Church" (p. 7). The whole document is pervaded by a spirit of genuine piety, humble self-criticism and the serious desire to listen to the Word of God. It deserves the attention of all Australian churches, who, indeed, "would do well to ask themselves" the four questions (p. 26): 1) "Is our message unequivocally conditioned by what God said to man in Jesus Christ?", 2) "In listening to that Word have we sought the aid and guidance of our confessing forebears?", 3) "Are those of us who value the traditions of the past and cherish them, equally prepared to confess the Faith afresh in the present? Are we only confessionalists, or are we also confessing Christians?", 4) "Are we facing the world, or just facing each other?" As these questions are the climax of Part I "The Faith we have received," so "Our Confession" (pp. 37-40) is the climax of Part II "The Faith we affirm in common." Since our readers know the Report and since space does not permit to discuss the numerous historical problems touched upon in a document which is the result of the work of two years by more than 20 theologians, we confine ourselves to those four questions and ask how they have been answered in the new Confession.

Ad I. This question can be answered properly only if the scriptural principle of the Reformation is upheld. While the Report states clearly (e.g. p. 14) that the Church is always under the Scripture, the relationship between Scripture and the Word of God is not clarified. "To recognise in Scripture the Word of God" (14) seems to mean that the true Word of God is found in Scripture because it is "the unique earthly instrument through which the Church hears the Living Word" (34) that is "mediated through the Scriptures" (33). This view, held also by Anglican and Lutheran theologians, abolishes the truly ecumenical doctrine that the Bible *is* the Word of God.

Ad 2 and 3. Of the creeds and confessions it is said: "The Church cannot afford to ignore these. Nor can she be content simply to repeat them . . . God is calling His Church to declare the ancient faith anew" (27). No church wants "simply to repeat" the Nicene or the Apostles' Creed when they are Sunday by Sunday repeated in the divine service. The Church confesses them, and that implies the praise of God, as the Report points out (p. 13). If we do that, why should we not accept the full dogmatic content of these creeds? Are they not thoroughly biblical? God does not call us to "declare the ancient faith anew" by leaving out in our new formulas Biblical doctrines like the Virgin Birth of our Lord or His bodily resurrection. If one compares the "confession" (p. 37ff.) with the Creeds, it is obvious that the Scriptural

content of the Creeds is not rendered, probably because the authors did not want to make declarations which by some or many of their people could not be honestly accepted. Does this mean to declare the faith anew? They should have made it clear why these doctrines are contained in the creeds which contain nothing but what is essential. Without the Virgin Birth, as K. Barth (DogmaticsI, 1, par 15, 3) shows, the incarnation becomes ambiguous or even doubtful. What do we celebrate at Christmas if "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary" becomes a myth? What is Easter if the holy sepulchre is like the grave of a martyr in which his body decays while, according to the belief of the Ancient Church, he has already been raised to heaven in the "first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4)? This is the reason why we, instead of formulating the creeds anew, better simply to confirm them unequivocally, as our fathers did in the Reformation. The same we should do with the content of the confessions of our fathers, as far as the fundamental doctrines of the Reformation are concerned, e.g., the sola gratia. In the absence of a clear statement that man is saved by grace alone without any doing of himself lies the greatest weakness of the new confession. Arminianism seems to be taken for granted, and the comforting biblical doctrines of predestination (Election) seems to have disappeared. The strangest misunderstanding of the Reformation is the reference to the doctrine of justification (p. 41). "We would demonstrate our justification by faith through seeking further to demonstrate the Church's unity." How can we demonstrate God's judgment through which He makes Christ's righteousness our own? What would Luther and Calvin (Inst. III, cap. II) say about this theologia gloriae? Here speaks "a church which is seeking to recover a message of justification by faith" (41). But can a church make a new confession without having understood the heart of the Gospel? Can we claim to continue the work of our fathers without having understood their confession?

Ad. 4. We ought, indeed, to remember that the Church has to confess facing the world. Grateful for this admonition we must ask, to take one instance, whether we fulfil our missionary task over against the peoples of Asia if we repeat the old prejudice as if Christianity were a Western religion whose doctrine must be translated from "West European terms" into a language understandable to Asians and Africans. Whatever may be Western in our churches, our dogma is thoroughly Asiatic, as all adversaries of the Christian faith in Europe from Nero and Tacitus to Nietzsche and Hitler have known. The Fathers of the Nicene Creed were Asians. Even of the Greek philosophy which they are supposed to have used nothing is Greek except the language. As to the Latin Church, it arose in Africa while the Church of Rome for some generations still consisted mainly of Greek speaking Asian immigrants. The Father of Western theology, Augustine, who has determined the theology of the Middle Ages and of the Reformation, was an African who felt about the Romans very much the same as his present countrymen about the French. Would it not be better to bring to the peoples of Asia and Africa the great Christian theology of their forbears instead of the diluted 18th century Pietism and Rationalism that speaks in many a confession of these younger churches?

We do not want to minimise what is great in the present Report. It is outstanding in many respects, also in its honesty. Its shortcomings are the shortcomings of all our modern churches of Reformed,

Anglican and Lutheran origin. We are strong in putting questions and weak in answering them. We have lost the understanding of the dogma of the Church. Consequently we have lost the distinction between church and heresy. Discussing the biblical idea of the confession, Luther says to the first representative of modern enlightened Christianity, Erasmus: "Take away the firm statements, and you have destroyed Christianity" *(Tolle assertiones, et Christianismum tulisti).* This is the great danger in which we all are. The Report should be understood as a challenge to us all. A confession is demanded from all our churches. But a *new* confession will come to us, as gift of the Holy Spirit, only if we have thoroughly understood the old one and are able to judge it by the ultimate rule and standard of all doctrine, the Scriptures as the Word of God.

H. SASSE.

BIBLICAL EXEGESIS IN THE QUMRAN TEXTS

By F. F. Bruce (Eerdmans), 1959; $2.50.

This book is an expansion of lectures given in universities in Holland. It is a timely discussion of the exegetical methods employed by the Qumran sect. The kind of interpretation used is known as *pesher*, which is an interpretation beyond the power of ordinary wisdom to attain. It comes from God by special illumination. Behind the *pesher* lay the *raz*, a mystery. The *raz* was given to the Teacher of Righteousness, the founder of the Qumran community, who then gave the *pesharim*. In general this Teacher "discovered" that the time of the end was at hand, from his special insight into the ancient prophets, all of whose words had references to the end.

In seven very lucid chapters Dr. Bruce follows out the implications of these basic ideas. There is an excellent summary of the principles of interpretation, of which he finds seven (p. 9, 16). In an historical chapter (2) he gives the setting of the whole Qumran movement. He holds that the teacher arose towards the end of the second century B.C.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the Zadokite work, and chapter 4 to Messianic Interpretation in Qumran (p. 37-49). The total picture is that "the dawn of the new age would be marked by the appearance of a worthy prophet, a worthy priest and a worthy king." The Teacher of Righteousness is probably to be placed outside this group.

The sect identified itself with both the Servant of the Lord and the Danielic "one like unto the Son of Man." Its function was "to make propitiation for the land" and "to execute judgment upon wickedness." Bruce suggests that even before Jesus, there was a group which envisaged the time of the end in terms of a unitive exegesis of Isaiah 40 ff. and the visions of Daniel" (p. 58).

The closing chapters deal with the value of the Qumran methods of exegesis for our understanding of Daniel and for some New Testament discussions.

Ample notes conveniently collected in the back of the book, conclude a volume which gives a concise yet thorough description of Qumran exegetical procedures. The book is warmly commended to Qumran students.

GOD'S KINGDOM AND OURS

By Gabriel Hebert (S.C.M. Press Ltd., London), 1959, pp. 192; 10/6.

The debt which Christians in Australia owe to the work of Father Gabriel, of the Society of the Sacred Mission at Crafers in South

Australia, continues to grow. Within a few months we have received from his hand the preparatory document for study by the National Conference of Australian Churches on the authority of the Word of God, and the book which is the subject of this review.

It is possible to draw parallels between these two volumes. Both have a succinctness which enables much to be said in a small space; both display a simplicity of style which hides from the undiscerning the wide knowledge of thoughts ancient and modern which underlies it; both owe something to discussions with many people; and both are written in Australia, for Australians, by one who has done much to clear our thinking of the insularity which threatens at times to cloud it.

God's Kingdom and Ours is an attempt to help the Church in Australia to *be* the Church; expressing, in its corporate worship and the life of its members in the community, the concern of God for the souls and the bodies of all men and women. The author makes this attempt by setting the general indifference of Australians to the Church alongside the story of missionary enterprise in Asia, and showing how often Christians have been content to transplant the practices and preconceptions (and the division!) of one land to another, and complacently assume that they now have the Church in the new land. The conception of this ministry as a professional class, the idea of liturgy as having nothing to do with daily work, and the pattern of the European parish, are among the things which have (in Australia as well as in Asia) hampered the life of the Church; and we need to accept contemporary indifference as a call to courageous thinking and acting in the name of the Lord. The need of corporate repentance for the common sin is mentioned more than once (e.g., pp. 113-114, 160).

There are indications that the necessary self-criticism is already taking place, and in his last chapter Father Gabriel points to some of these. But he makes it plain that there are others which are yet to be discovered as we seek to build our own building upon the Foundation already laid.

The book is addressed to the many people in Australia "who are on the fringe of the Church, just inside or just outside" (p. 7); but it may serve its end most effectively if it is used as the basis for discussion by those many keen folk who want guidance as to what it is that their Church is trying to do.

J. F. PETER.

STUDIES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Vol. I (Matthew V). By D. Martyn Lloyd Jones (I.V.F. London), 1959, pp. 320; 25/- Aust.

This is a volume of thirty sermons by Dr. Lloyd Jones preached for the most part on successive Sunday mornings in the course of his regular ministry at Westminster Chapel, London. Each sermon would last about forty minutes, and they are reproduced without any attempt at literary finish ("warts and all," says the author), not from the preacher's notes, but from a record of their actual delivery. Herein lies at least part of their value. The reader is able to study actual sermons and is in a better position to judge the reasons for their effectiveness. For Dr. Lloyd Jones is an effective preacher, though he is the opposite of what is sometimes considered a "popular" preacher. He is Puritan in theology, and in manner. He eschews all humour in the pulpit, all effects and gimmicks (such as even respectable preachers

will often allow for producing the right atmosphere or for encouraging hearers to a decision). He dislikes evangelism of the Billy Graham variety. Yet he has probably the largest regular congregation in London (in a not very accessible locality) and, for what the observation is worth, his is the only church the reviewer has attended whose congregation contains as many men as women.

Dr. Lloyd Jones usually preaches on a short verse — here are thirty sermons on the fifth chapter of Matthew — and his whole aim is to apply the text to the conscience of the hearers. There can be little preaching at the present day which brings home to the hearer with greater effect the moral content of the gospel. He can hit very hard indeed. While there is evidence of careful exegetical preparation on the part of the preacher, the sermons as delivered are more broadly expositional, if the distinction may be allowed. It is the *present* situation which is always the context of the word the preacher is applying. Frequently he reminds one of Hugh Latimer in his simple analysis of his text, taking two or three broad aspects of it, with vigorous and pointed applications, and with cumulative effect packing a good punch behind the text itself. Dr. Lloyd Jones repeatedly refers to the state of the world and of society in a way which some might consider over-simplified and too general. However, this is probably part of his purpose, which is to make the spiritual issues of life clear and unmistakeable to every hearer.

D. W. B. ROBINSON.

A NEW QUEST OF THE HISTORICAL JESUS

By James M. Robinson. "Studies in Biblical Theology" (S.C.M. Press, London), 1959; price 9/6 sterling.

This difficult but rewarding book is about the urgent problem of Faith and History, as raised by Rudolph Bultmann, and further studied by his disciples Kasemann, Fuchs, Gunther Bornkamm and Conzelmann, who now hold important professorial chairs in Germany.

God has revealed Himself in His mighty acts in History — but what is History? Two generations ago, the Ritschlians were seeking to find a secure ground of faith, not in the traditional church dogma, but in the verified and "objective" results of historical study, which showed "what can be known of Jesus of Nazareth by the scientific methods of the historian" (p. 22). This *Historie* sought to show "exactly what happened"; and the result was a portrait of Jesus as the historical embodiment of Ethical Idealism. But this was in fact an impossible aim; for the N.T. writers were not dispassionate historical investigators, but were concerned with proclaiming a Gospel; proclaiming Jesus as the Saviour.

But the other German word for History, *Geschichte,* is used to denote not the fixing of dates and causal sequences, but rather the story of persons in the situations with which they were confronted; and the historian cannot pursue such a study without thinking himself back into those situations, and seeing such a matter as the Call to Discipleship as an actual issue for himself. So it is that the evangelists tell of our Lord's words and acts as immediately relevant to the life of each Christian; the call of the Gospel is to escape from the "inauthentic existence" set out in the Four woes in Luke 6:24-26, with its false security, and to "lose the Self" (Mark 8:35) and renounce all man-made security, trusting only in God. Hence the old Quest of the Historical Jesus was not only impossible, but also illegitimate,

since it was seeking security in a *Historie* which was an artificial reconstruction of the events, in a "case for Christianity" which men had devised. It is no less possible to-day to seek a false security in a cogent logical demonstration of the truth of the Resurrection, or by finding in the gospels proof-texts for a dogmatic Christology. But if we can have proofs of this kind, is faith any longer needed?

The New Quest of the Historical Jesus, which this book seeks to outline, is based on the idea of History as *Geschichte*, and of faith as self-commitment to Him who demands of us an entire self-commitment. Therefore the historical element is now seen to be vital; for if, as Bultmann held in his form-critical days, we can know nothing about the acts of the Jesus of history, the Church's Lord would become a myth. Bultmann in his earlier work thought of Jesus as standing with John the Baptist within the old Jewish order, so that Christianity began with Paul (pp. 16-17). But his disciples are speaking of the Baptist as "the sentinel at the frontier between the aeons" (p. 119), so that the new "aeon" begins with Jesus; and they are learning to trace the connection of thought between the *eschatological* message of our Lord's ministry and the *Christological* message of the apostolic church. They are showing that in both cases there is essentially the same call to full self-commitment; the Gospel proclaimed *by* Jesus and the Gospel proclaimed by the apostles *about* Jesus both depend upon the Person of Jesus ("Jesus Christ come in the flesh," I John 4:2), in whom entire self-commitment, even to the death of the cross, has been historically exemplified.

This study which the post-Bultmannians are carrying on is not concerned chiefly with terminology, with words and the sense in which words were used, but with the essential underlying meaning (p. 120); and they are following a line which promises to be most fruitful. Canon Max Warren quotes a saying of a modern Japanese layman: "The Japanese know how to die for something in which they believe. The sickness in Japan to-day is that the Japanese people cannot find anything to believe in for which they are prepared to die." This, if I mistake not, indicates the aim which inspires this New Quest of the Historical Jesus.

GABRIEL HEBERT, S.S.M.

DARIUS THE MEDE

By J. C. Whitcomb (Eerdmans), pp. 84; $2.75.

The precise identification of Darius the Mede of Daniel 5:31; 6:3, etc., continues to exercise the minds of Old Testament scholars. Some writers suggest that the Bible writer is here confused and perpetrates an historical error. W. F. Albright deplores the attitude of hyper-criticism towards the whole question. D. J. Wiseman has recently suggested that Darius the Mede was none other than Cyrus the Persian.

One very old solution is to equate Darius the Mede with Gubaru, the famous governor of Babylon and the Region beyond the River, who appears under the name of Gubaru in the cuneiform documents of the period immediately following the fall of Babylon. This old solution is taken up again in this book and set forth in the light of recent discoveries.

Dr. Whitcomb first presents all the biblical data concerning Darius the Mede (Cp. 1). Then he collects a wide range of cuneiform source material about Gubaru the governor of Babylon (Cp. 2). He carefully

distinguishes between Ugbaru governor of Gutium and Gubaru governor of Babylon (Cp. 3). Then he tackles the objections of H. H. Rowley to the identification of Darius the Mede with Gubaru the governor of Babylon in a careful discussion (Cp. 4), concluding (with the approval of Albright) that "Darius" may have been an honorific title bestowed on one who was really a vice-king. In chapter 5 he scouts the literature of the past fifty years for other identifications, and argues against these and in chapter 6 he rejects the idea that the name Darius the Mede arose from a conflation of confused traditions. His summary and conclusion are succinctly stated in a brief concluding chapter.

There are four useful appendices, one giving an outline of the history of Medes and Persians down to 520 B.C., a second giving the events in the year of Babylon's fall, a third setting out the Neo Babylonian and Persian kings, and a fourth quoting Xenophon's material on Gobryas. A bibliography and two useful indices are also provided.

The study is a most helpful review of the present position and may well prove to be the final solution, though it is admitted that up to the present it has no actual extra-biblical support.

J. A. THOMPSON.

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The Holy Bible, The Berkeley Version in Modern English, edited by G. Verkuyl (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids); $7.95. The Berkeley Bible is a completely new version of the Scriptures, to which a staff of twenty translators has contributed. It is pleasing to find among these the Rev. Gerard Van Groningen, of the Reformed Church, Geelong. The translation aims at a fresh but reliable rendering of the original languages, employing the choicest current usage. It is presented in paragraph form, verses being indicated by unobtrusive numerals in the text. Concise footnotes, mostly factual, are provided for guidance; and dating is also adopted, although it is recognised that this cannot be arbitrary. The type is large and clear, and the volume is attractively produced. Only sustained use can test the real worth of this version, but first acquaintance suggests that here is another valuable and commendable contribution to the wider dissemination and understanding of the Scriptures.

The New Translations of the Bible, by E. H. Robertson. "Studies in Ministry and Worship, 12" (S.C.M. Press); 10/6. This is an account of the English translations over a period of 350 years, touching on more than a score of complete translations of the Bible and nearly as many partial translations. The starting point is the Authorised Version of 1611, introduced by a brief sketch of its predecessors. Then follows the Revised Version. Later versions include not only those of James Moffatt, J. B. Phillips and E. V. Rieu, but also the Roman Catholic translation by Ronald Knox and the Jewish translation by Hugh Schonfield. The procedure adopted in the book is to give an account of each translation, with some illustrative extracts and comments. The final chapter indicates the work that is being done on the New Translation of which the New Testament is expected to be ready in 1961.

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